supply conditions in the foreign exchange market, which are difficut to predict with certainty.

(c) Does not arise.

Operation of Private Airlines on International Routes

1815. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been made by the private airlines to allow them to operate on International routes at least to those destinations which are not being linked by Air India and Indian Airlines.;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon;

(c) whether there is any proposal to operate Indian Airlines of Air India flights to destinations hitherto not connected;

(d) the International Routes under bilateral rights identified by Indian Airlines and Air India as uneconomical; and

(e) the reasons for not allowing private airlines at least on those uneconomical International Routes?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM): (a) Some private airlines have sought permission to operate international services to the countries which are already linked by national carriers.

(b) Under the existing policy, private airlines are not designated for scheduled international operations.

(c) Air India has recently introduced a service between India and Chicago

(d) and (e) No international route can be classiffed as uneconomical on a long-term basis as the financial viability of air services operations depends on growth in trade commerce, tourism etc. over a period of time. So far, no private airlines has come forward to operate on sectors which do not promise immediate financial returns.

Advances to Housing by Banks

1816. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether advances for housing by banks are considered as priority sector; if so, upto what limit is considered as priority sector lending;

(b) whether Government are aware that only advances upto Rs. 2 lakhs is considered as priority sector in case of Urban Banks and if so, whether it is not unrealistic in view of the high cost of construction; and

(c) whether Government will consider raising this limit to Rs. 5 lakhs to promote housing for the middle Income group?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Advance to housing by banks upto Rs. 2 lakhs are considered as priority sector lending. This limit was prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in March/ April, 1994. RBI has reported that there is currently no proposal for upward revision of this limit, as these advances are mainly for low income groups. RBI has reported that banks also grant advances beyond Rs. 2 lakhs depending upon the income and repaying capacity of the borrower. However, these advances are not classified as priority sector leading.

Tourism Policy of States

1817. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government has asked State Governments to prepare and submit their tourism policy; and

(b) if so, the steps State Governments have taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Preparation of Tourism policies is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The following State